

Applicant : Michael A. Hooker  
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This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of forming a protective coating upon a polymer substrate-to-abrasion that softens when heated, the method comprising:

printing upon the substrate a plurality of dots with spaces of exposed substrate therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots to harden the plurality of dots into a protective coating, wherein the spaces between the dots permit flexibility of the substrate without damage to the plurality of dots; [[and]]

heating the substrate to a temperature at which the substrate softens sufficiently to permit forming thereof; and

forming the substrate in a molding machine after curing the plurality of dots.

Claim 2 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein printing upon the substrate includes screen printing the plurality of dots upon the substrate.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A method of forming a protective coating upon a substrate to abrasion, the method comprising:

printing upon the substrate a plurality of dots with spaces of exposed substrate therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots to harden the plurality of dots into a protective coating, wherein the spaces between the dots permit flexibility of the substrate without damage to the plurality of dots; and

forming the substrate in a molding machine after curing the plurality of dots; and ~~The method as claimed in claim 1,~~ wherein the substrate is a polyester-polycarbonate alloy.

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Claim 4 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the plurality of dots are in a stochastically-generated arrangement.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein printing upon the substrate includes printing a repeating dot arrangement.

Claim 6 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein curing the plurality of dots includes exposing the plurality of dots to ultraviolet light.

Claim 7 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein curing the plurality of dots includes heating the plurality of dots with a heater.

Claim 8 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protective coating is substantially transparent.

Claim 9 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the printing step is a second surface printing step.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method of forming a protective coating upon a substrate to abrasion, the method comprising:

printing upon the substrate a plurality of dots with spaces of exposed substrate therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots to harden the plurality of dots into a protective coating, wherein the spaces between the dots permit flexibility of the substrate without damage to the plurality of dots; and

forming the substrate in a molding machine after curing the plurality of dots; and ~~The method as claimed in claim 1,~~ wherein the substrate is a light-transmitting substrate.

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Claim 11 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising printing at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics upon the substrate.

Claim 12 (original): The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein printing at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics upon the substrate occurs prior to printing the plurality of dots upon the substrate.

Claim 13 (original): The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the plurality of dots and the at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics are printed on a same side of the substrate.

Claim 14 (original): The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the plurality of dots and the at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics are printed on opposite sides of the substrate.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A method of forming a protective coating upon a substrate subject to abrasion, the method comprising:

printing upon the substrate a plurality of dots with spaces of exposed substrate therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots to harden the plurality of dots into a protective coating, wherein the spaces between the dots permit flexibility of the substrate without damage to the plurality of dots; and further comprising soft curing the plurality dots to generate stipple thereon.

Claim 16 (original): The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein soft curing the plurality of dots includes exposing the plurality of dots to low-wattage ultraviolet light bulbs and a flow of gas over the plurality of dots.

Claim 17 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the dots have an average size of between 50 and 150 microns.

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Claim 18 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the dots have an average size of between 80 and 100 microns.

Claim 19 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the dots have an average size of about 90 microns.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes covering between 20% and 70% of the substrate.

Claim 21 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes covering between 20% and 40% of the printed substrate.

Claim 22 (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes covering about 25% of the printed substrate.

Claims 23-37 (canceled)

Claim 38 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a product having a protective coating, the method comprising:

printing a plurality of dots upon a polymer substrate of the type that softens when heated, the plurality of dots having spaces therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots into a hardened protective coating on the substrate;

heating the substrate to a temperature at which the substrate softens sufficiently to permit forming thereof;

forming the substrate to a desired shape of the product in a molding machine after curing the plurality of dots; and

flexing the hardened protective coating by the spaces between the dots while forming the substrate in a molding machine.

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Claim 39 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes screen printing the plurality of dots.

Claim 40 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the dots are substantially separated from one another by spaces.

Claim 41 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes repeatedly printing a pattern of dots.

Claim 42 (original): The method as claimed in claim 41, wherein the pattern of dots is a stochastically-generated pattern.

Claim 43 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the hardened protective coating is substantially transparent.

Claim 44 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the substrate is a sheet of plastic material.

Claim 45 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a product having a protective coating, the method comprising:

printing a plurality of dots upon a substrate, the plurality of dots having spaces therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots into a hardened protective coating on the substrate;

forming the substrate to a desired shape of the product in a molding machine after curing the plurality of dots; and

flexing the hardened protective coating by the spaces between the dots while forming the substrate in a molding machine, wherein the substrate is a sheet of ~~The method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the plastic material is a polyester-polycarbonate alloy.~~

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Claim 46 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a product having a protective coating, the method comprising:

printing a plurality of dots upon a ~~The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the~~  
~~substrate is~~ light-transmissive substrate, the plurality of dots having spaces therebetween;

curing the plurality of dots into a hardened protective coating on the substrate;

forming the substrate to a desired shape of the product in a molding machine after  
curing the plurality of dots; and

flexing the hardened protective coating by the spaces between the dots while forming  
the substrate in a molding machine.

Claim 47 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, further comprising printing at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics upon the substrate.

Claim 48 (original): The method as claimed in claim 47, wherein printing at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics upon the substrate occurs prior to printing the plurality of dots upon the substrate.

Claim 49 (original): The method as claimed in claim 48, wherein the plurality of dots and the at least one of text, a pattern, and graphics are printed on a same side of the substrate.

Claim 50 (original): The method as claimed in claim 47, wherein the plurality of dots and the at least one of a text, a pattern, and graphics are printed on opposite sides of the substrate.

Claim 51 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein curing the plurality of dots includes exposing the plurality of dots to ultraviolet light.

Claim 52 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein curing the plurality of dots includes heating the plurality of dots with a heater.

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Claim 53 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the step of forming the substrate is performed in a mold.

Claim 54 (previously presented): A method of manufacturing a product having a protective coating, the method comprising:

- printing a plurality of dots upon a substrate, the plurality of dots having spaces therebetween;

- curing the plurality of dots into a hardened protective coating on the substrate;

- forming the substrate to a desired shape of the product;

- flexing the hardened protective coating by the spaces between the dots while forming the substrate; and further comprising:

- partially curing the plurality of dots prior to curing the plurality of dots; and

- forming stipple upon the plurality of dots while partially curing the plurality of dots.

Claim 55 (original): The method as claimed in claim 54, wherein:

- partially curing the plurality of dots includes exposing the plurality of dots to a flow of nitrogen gas and to ultraviolet light; and

- curing the plurality of dots includes exposing the plurality of dots to ultraviolet light having a lower intensity than the ultraviolet light used to partially cure the plurality of dots.

Claim 56 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the dots have an average size of between 50 and 150 microns.

Claim 57 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the dots have an average size of between 80 and 100 microns.

Claim 58 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the dots have an average size of about 90 microns.

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Claim 59 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the plurality of dots includes covering between 20% and 70% of the substrate.

Claim 60 (currently amended): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes covering between ~~[[205]]~~ 20% and 40% of the printed substrate.

Claim 61 (original): The method as claimed in claim 38, wherein printing the plurality of dots includes covering about 25% of the printed substrate.